



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 December 2006

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-first session

26 February-9 March 2007

Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

Statement submitted by Soroptimist International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.



Statement

Soroptimist International believes that the world's children are entitled to special care and assistance. In recognising the rights of the child as paramount, Soroptimist International has particular concern for the rights of the girl child and fully supports the strategic objectives and actions relative to the Girl Child in the Beijing Platform for Action and in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Soroptimist International condemns all forms of violence against girls, particularly sexual violence, sexual exploitation, trafficking, and harmful traditional practices.

Girls are often victims because of the -

- Pressures to engage in sexual activity
- Lack of protective laws or failure to enforce them
- Discrimination from the earliest stages of their lives
- Forced early marriage or sexual activity for profit
- Negative portrayals in the media
- Exploitative labour

Whilst Soroptimist International believes that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is correct in emphasising the responsibilities of parents, guardians and the community to provide direction and guidance to girls to exercise their rights, it believes that governments must -

- Ratify and implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Fulfil their commitment to International Conventions, treaties and agreements relative to the girl child by developing and implementing laws that guarantee girls protection from abuse, violence, exploitation, and neglect
- Take measures to ensure that all girl children are registered immediately after birth
- Ensure equal access for girls to primary, secondary and higher education including vocational and technical education
- Forbid exploitative child labour
- Provide educational programmes to help prevent early marriages and teenage pregnancies
- Provide support services for teenage mothers to learn parenting skills and to continue their education and training
- Strengthen the role of the family and improve the status of the girl child within the family
- Eliminate barriers which prevent girls developing to their full potential
- Ensure that the girl child is not exploited in the media
- Ensure that the aggregation of statistical information is gender related

Soroptimist International pledges its members to work for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against the girl child, including harmful attitudes and traditional practices, which define her gender as second class within the family and in society.

Soroptimist International believes that education of the girl child is the key to progress and will work in partnerships locally and internationally to realise this aim.